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*John Campbell with friends
best wishes*

AN INDIAN CIVILIAN'S CAREER,

WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT MIGHT BE,

WITH SOME REMARKS ON

ENGLISH MAL-ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA.

BY

A HAILEYBURY MAN.

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AN INDIAN CIVILIAN'S CAREER, WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT MIGHT BE,

With some remarks on English mal-administration in India.

BY A HAILEYBURY MAN.

Early in 1865, I being a covenanted civilian of the Bombay branch of H.M.'s. Indian Civil Service was asked by a friend, who was thinking of having his son prepared to compete in the Indian Civil Service Examination, to write what I thought of the career which success in the examination would lead to. I wrote what follows :

The expense of time and money on a preparation which may or may not be successful is not a good investment for a young man beginning life. Especially as the education of a candidate in the competitive examination is of the order cram, and not of practical use in after life. The time spent in preparing is a loss, even if the candidate succeed in the examination, and in the event of failure, he receives a disappointment at a period of his life when a blow in the face has much the same deterrent effect which it has, when smartly administered at the commencement of a fight. I may add here, in a general way, on the subject of competitive examinations, that when the competition is limited to competitors under twenty-one years of age, the limitation often operates so as to exclude just the kind of good healthy

average minds and bodies, as are most generally useful. For the best minds are often the slowest to develop, and as they are at the age of twenty-one by the terms of the test as to age, and by their nature unfit to cope with precocious intellects which mature rapidly, and rot as quickly, and whose maturity is at best a poor thing, the consequence is, rejection of good material and selection of useless weeds. This is a matter which seems to have escaped the notice of doctrinaires to whom we are indebted for competitive examinations; but those gentlemen, who would not be at a loss for a theory how to manufacture a man, know little of him in the form of human nature.

A variety of causes have lately rendered a Civil appointment in India much less valuable than it used to be. The transfer of the Government from the East India Company to the Crown deprived civilians of many privileges which they enjoyed in times gone by. They are no longer protégés, and blood relations of a powerful court of directors, and of the many and important changes which the service has sustained since India was governed from Westminster, I do not remember one which has not resulted disadvantageously to all concerned by it. Salaries have suffered directly, and indirectly, to an extent which in the Bombay service is computed at a curtailment of 20 per cent. of the whole amount of what used to be the average receipt of pay of a civilian during his term of service; and this, and that the rupee has recently fallen enormously in value, has placed the pecuniary status of a civilian very much below what it was. A loss of prestige has ensued. Asiatics have mainly a money standard of value for those placed in authority over them, and no one but a civilian can fully understand how much that moral support has been weakened, which he formerly derived from a powerful position.

It was not till within the last seven years that an Indian career was at all universally felt to be an exile, that it is so, is now painfully perceptible to all classes of Government servants. The stimulus which the American war, and better methods of communication in the interior of India has given to trade, has affected the value of fixed salaries to a degree, scarcely credible by people in this country. Provisions of all sorts have every where risen in price immensely. I take the instance of Dharwar, an out of the way place in the Southern Mahratthee country, some three hundred miles and more from Bombay. When I was there in 1854-55 fowls were selling at eight for the rupee. It is hard to get one now for the same money. Gram, the grain on which horses are fed, was at a price of upwards of fifty pounds for the rupee. Twelve pounds is about the quantity now purchasable for the same amount, and so it is in the case, of flour, and labour. Everything has become much more expensive. House rent has risen at most of the stations where Europeans are, at some of them, natives have taken to living in houses, which were formerly set apart for Europeans, and all those consequences have occurred as regards prices, which might be expected, from a great change in the prospects of producers. Formerly a ryot (a native farmer) did not know what to do with his surplus produce, there were no roads by which to take it to market, and indeed there were no markets. He was willing enough to receive small prices from an European, now facilities for intercommunication have produced markets, to which every thing, not wanted by the producer is exported, and the government servant is the only sufferer by the change. For he is not only prohibited from trading, under penalty of being turned out of his service; but he is even forbidden to hold land in the Presidency to which he belongs, and indeed from taking any active interest in the country in

which he lives, except such as his duties may lead to. He is, if a married man with a family, and unless in receipt of at least £1,200 per annum, unable to provide himself with comforts which are absolutely necessary to existence in an Indian climate. What are here luxuries, are there necessities of life. If a man's wife cannot get out for a drive in a carriage, she dies, walk she can't, the climate is too severe for it, and exercise she must have. Every official must keep horses. His duties constantly oblige him to ride long distances. The cost of horse keeping, and its rapid increase is fraught with difficulty to Europeans in India. Horses are indispensibly necessary, and that a larger and larger portion of income is being day by day absorbed in keeping them, is a matter which the Indian Government will have to deal with some day, especially as the price of horses has lately risen, owing to the Turkish Government having forbidden the export of Arabs from the Persian Gulf, which up to within the last year supplied nine tenths of the horses used by Europeans in India. A man cannot be expected to spend the lion's share of his hard earned money, on expensive arrangements from which the Government reaps the chief benefit.

It would be easy to fill quires of paper with matter showing how grievously the rise in prices has affected stationary incomes, and rendered Government service in India a terrible exile, a thing too, the heaven to bear, that there is a well grounded apprehension on the part of the exiles, that their interests are dealt with, as if they were antagonistic to those of the governing power at home.

The climate is worse than it is supposed to be in England; and its effect on an European constitution is irreparable. It makes premature old men. There is no such thing as becoming acclimatised. It is true that the first year

of residence in India, is the period in which a large proportion of the deaths occur; and the circumstance has been noticed improperly, as evidence that the European constitution adapts itself to the climate. But in reality the fact merely shews, that many succumb to the shock with which the change to India is attended; and it is open for any careful observer to discover, in the course of his Indian experience, that a certain, and sometimes by no means a gradual deterioration of health is the direct and inevitable consequence of a residence in India to an European. None but constitutions of great vitality, and nervous strength, can achieve an uninterrupted stay of ten years, and not one man in ten thousand can remain much longer and live.

On one of those rare occasions of debate, when the House of Commons permits itself to conquer India, and when by the way, the object was, as it usually is on such occasions, a curtailment of salaries of Indian officials, Mr. Bright said that:—"For his part, the retired Indians he had seen reminded him of gentlemen from the Highlands." Mr. Bright saw iron men who had seen their contemporaries pass away from them. Aye the men he saw, who had perhaps survived a thirty-five years' service in India, were the survivors of hecatombs of good men who had perished in that time. Such men had seen four or five generations of contemporaries pass away. They could build their houses in the Highlands, or anywhere else, with the bones of old friends left in India.

The climate presses with exceptional severity upon a civilian, as a rule his duties oblige him to reside in tents for a large part of the year. In the Bombay presidency he is only under a roof from June to November, and the seven and even eight months of the year, during which he is moving about his districts, is spent in total isolation. He may

perhaps, if he is lucky, meet with an European once or twice while he is out. But he is just as likely not to do so; and the solitude of the life is so oppressive to many people, as to render their lives a misery to them. I have known
 6 a man, after six months of it, become restless, and then at the end of a week or so of great mental suffering, saddle his horse in the night, and ride nigh on a hundred miles, to a place where some other poor wretch was known to be. This state of isolation and solitude makes a man forget

That it is best to ponder ere you wed.
 That some wise folk have even said,
 So hard it is to choose a wife
 A man should ponder all his life.

and a marriage done in a hurry often adds to a civilian's inconveniences. But even if he make a judicious match, and the opportunities for doing so are few and far between, his wife's condition is not a happy one, she cannot stay out in the districts with her husband in the hot season, a tent life would kill or send her home to England, and even if she manage to linger on in India for three or four years, which is about the average length of time which an European woman can remain. The separation comes sooner or later, and then the last state of a civilian is worse than the first. His children and his wife go away from him. The children he does not see again for years. They are turned over to friends, if he have any, with the usual results; and his wife spends a good deal of her time at the hills, and in travelling to and from England by the overland route, at an average cost of £400 for the journey there and back.

There are other formidable drawbacks to a married life in India, which it is easy to understand, that solitude, and ennui are likely to bring about. The separations, the anxieties, the sickness, and sorrow of an Indian career are not to be made up for by any money consideration. The life is unnatural, and for my part, I would at once give

up thirteen years of service, being nearly a year more than half the time I have to serve to entitle me to a pension of £1,000 per annum, and certain prospects of at least £1,800 to £2,000 per annum, during the rest of my service, for a mercantile opening, which would give me £500 a year here, and a hope of a rise. But this I am not likely to get. Since my return to England, on three years' furlough, I have found, that having no profession, no quid to offer for any man's quo, I am outrageously Indian, behind the day, and good for nothing. To save my life I could not earn a day's wage by doing anything in this great brick wilderness of wants.

I have shewn you the bad side of a civilian's career. There is of course a silver lining to the cloud. If a man do his duty any where, he does sufficiently well. But of India as far as the country is concerned, as it affects an European residing in it, I know of no good except that a man with even a small capital may turn it over there regularly three times a year. But he must not be a government servant, to whose other delights is added the cheerful prospect of seeing outsider after outsider come and go with a fortune, after at most ten years of it, and during the years (63-64) as many months sufficed to place speculators and merchants in possession of more than five and twenty long years of misery, will ever put in the pocket of a civilian.

I may add that the duty in both the judicial and Revenue departments of the Civil Service, is on many accounts very harrassing, and unsatisfactory. A cause of feebleness in the government is a penny wise pound foolish policy, which attempts to obtain, at the hands of one servant, what it would take a dozen hard working men to perform properly. The consequence is that work is always in arrears. Strive as he may, a civilian cannot, in nine out of ten offices, of which he is placed in control, keep down

the current business ; and this is a source of endless vexation and annoyance. A thing which could be easily disposed of, if it could be handled when it occurred, is often by delay, rendered impossible to deal with. A Judge's file is usually over 500 cases in arrears, and it is, as much as he can do to deal with the criminal trials, and a moiety of the civil cases. The system of administering justice, although inherently faulty, because it is based on an attempt to apply European principles, and institutions, to a state of things Asiatic, and therefore utterly repellant of the application, is even less to blame for the endless delay which attends Indian law-suits, in which the matter at issue is not very simple, than the impossible nature of the feat the Judge has to cope with, in grappling with his work. Made up as it is of almost every thing with which a Judge ought to have nothing to do, his difficulties out of court are at least equal to those he has to face in trying a case. For not only has he to try it, and to be often prosecutor, counsel for the defence, and judge in the same case ; but he has to direct and to perform the executive duties of underpaid native subordinates, who, shrewd and able as they are—and that, in many forms is no light matter for a judge to be on the alert against—naturally find it impossible to apply procedure, admirable enough perhaps in England, to Asiatic habits and manners which are as unlike those of the people of this country, as black is unlike white. An Indian Court of Law is constantly at its wit's end to know how to deal with difficulties arising out of the inapplicability of English methods, to the people they are foisted upon. For instance, the judge sits with assessors who are to play the part of a jury, in so far that they are to give their opinion as to the judgment which ought to be recorded. They listen to the proceedings with apparently profound attention, and with an appearance of intelligence and acumen, irresistably comic to any one having a sense of

the ridiculous, and aware that their thoughts, as they generally are, are far away from the trial. The judge having taken evidence, and heard both sides, puts the question to his Indian coadjutors. "How say you gentlemen?" With one voice they exclaim, "As your lordship pleases." To say otherwise would be to their minds a contempt, and a breach of etiquette, which nothing short of the rack would force them into.

Shams of this kind meet the civilian at every stage of his duty; and in every capacity in which he may be called on to serve, he is a grinder of air. He writes long wind bags which nobody has time to read. From the secretaries to government downwards, every officer is so enormously overtasked, as to render a thorough and efficient working out of anything impossible. A thing which requires consideration must be shelved. There is nothing else for it. It can wait, and so it does. There is time for nothing, but what is absolutely necessary to prevent the machine from coming to a dead stop; and that really not very important result is as often as not fended off by expedients, which could only be resorted to in a state of things combining all the faults of an European bureau, with those Asiatic vices which alone of the things of Asia, we have condescended to employ in the machinery of our government of India.

CHAP. II.

THE CAREER AS IT MIGHT BE.

Here ends what I had to say to my friend. But I cannot conclude this paper without acknowledging that there might be a phase in the martyrdom of an Indian civilian, which, if it were offered to him, would crown him with glory.

There are thought to be at least one hundred and eighty millions of people in India, whose civilization is several thousand years old; and although there, things have not taken so eminently practical a turn as they have here, still the civilization is worthy of the name, and to judge of it by the test of time, has not altogether failed to suit Hindoos. It is certainly, if it were handled intelligently, and kindly, susceptible of doing more for India than it has done. Another thing is equally certain. It cannot be seized by the neck, and stifled with advantage to anybody. The thing that is, and has been so long, ought to be accepted. Slow careful leading should be applied to it. Violent interferences, and stupid attempts to introduce Anglicisms of doubtful success here, should be avoided; and above all things, Doctrinaire devilments must be absolutely abstained from. The course to adopt is simple, far too simple ever to be sailed over. There is a broad smooth deep stream. Gentle as a dove, if you only float with it. But take care how you stem it. Its surface does not first shew the effect of an impediment. But the working deep down is none the less strong for that.

Here stands the matter to work upon. The acreage, occupied, and used in India by a vast population, is larger than that of any other inhabited region, which can fairly claim homogeneity of government. All used Russian acreage, all North American, settled and cultivated soil, including in that area, all the stars and stripes, and the union jack together, have won out of the wilderness, is not equal to the extent of land there is in India, used and owned by subjects of the British crown, and by principalities existing practically by British sufferance. Fertility is often marvellous, and the capacity arising out of two such tremendous forces of land, and labour met together is tremendous. Proper guidance only is requisite for the achievement of transcendental results, and the kind of guidance demanded, is of the simplest description. If an intelligence, as vigorous as that which has lately placed Prussia where it is, in point of European importance, were brought to bear upon Indian material, as we hold it in our hands, the grandeur of the result would as totally eclipse, as regards grandness, what has just happened in Europe, as the whole world might be expected to affect light in Europe, supposing the planet stood between Europe, and the light giving sun; and the value of the accomplishment would be enhanced, because, if done, it could only be done by means far away removed from the ignoble slaughter which was perpetrated by Prussia in Europe.

Fighting can do nothing for India, but hopelessly degrade it. The trade instinct with which the people of India are saturated, affords means for a consolidation of noble and lasting magnificence. A people beyond measure easy to lead and govern, should be appealed to through their habits and instincts. They should be told to cover their country with roads, and they would only be too glad to avail themselves of the advice, which should take the form of an order

to every town and village, to make and look after a fixed number of miles of road. The method has succeeded admirably in Norway and Sweden, which are supplied with the best roads in Europe, and it is one altogether consonant with Indian ways. A native government, if it made roads, would make them in this way, leaving the details to be arranged, as far as possible, by the people concerned, who would be as little as possible interfered with, by a wise system of government supervision. The roads would act as feeders to lines of railway, which would be constructed in the usual way by companies; and if the railway department of the Indian Government were placed on a decent footing of efficiency, which is not the case now, there would be no lack of Indian and European capital to place under its control much more extensive charge than it has. As a preliminary step towards this result, it is incumbent on the Imperial Government to look its liabilities honorably in the face. Great Britain is bound to India by a tremendous responsibility of her own seeking, and that seeking not always justifiable. It is a weak, foolish, and an abominably dishonourable policy, which condescends to shuffle out of a direct responsibility, by a flimsy pretence of a guarantee to Indian railway shareholders of five per cent. on their capital offered *by the Council of India*, as distinct from *an Imperial guarantee*. The highest form of guarantee possible is due from the British Government, to capital employed in all kinds of enterprise of public importance in British possessions in India; and if an Imperial guarantee were extended to Indian railways, there would be no difficulty in finding capital with which to make them.

No country in the world offers better inducement for railway enterprise than India. Its fertility, great extent, and population, are guarantees of a success which, under circumstances of inconceivable mismanagement, and abuse, has

even now established itself, as indeed could hardly be otherwise. The country is covered with villages and large towns, that from time immemorial, have been filled with traders, carrying on trade in the face of extraordinary obstacles. The railway carriages are always crowded by natives. Use them they will, for travelling at least, notwithstanding hardships from imperfect accommodation, and brutal treatment by drunken European railway subordinates, which would drive a less patient race to a frenzy of desperation; and nothing but a want of system, shameful to the last degree, in the traffic management of most of the Indian railways, keeps merchandise away from them. During the American war, at one of the stations on the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, there was a block of cotton carts, forty miles in length, awaiting the despatch of cotton to Bombay. The single line of railway was, it is true, inadequate to deal with this great press upon its service; but things were immensely complicated by the fact, that the station was in charge of an under-paid station master, who made hay while the sun shined. The trucks were regularly put up to auction every morning, and knocked down to the highest bidder, of an anxious throng of cotton owners, and others interested in getting it to Bombay, who eagerly bid against each other, to be allowed to pay the usual hire of a truck, which in many instances was an insignificant item in comparison to the bribe which the station master received at auction.

No doubt the Indian Government is by no means directly responsible for this sort of departmental mis-management in the working of Indian railways. But indirectly it is chargeable with a great weight of the evil. A penny wise pound foolish policy which prevades Indian maladministration, under pays all kinds of native subordinate officials, sacrificing honesty, to a short sighted economy. For, as is the case every where, honesty must be paid for like any

other commodity, and it commands a good price in the market. The government rate of pay of course decides the rates paid every where else; and consequently the railway people are underpaid, and they follow the corrupt practices by which government officials of their class make up for salaries, notoriously insufficient to secure an adequate amount of trustworthy service. However, notwithstanding mismanagement, and gross errors in construction, what Indian lines there are, pay their expenses, and will eventually do well; and it is admittedly established, that by avoiding mistakes, which experience ought to have guarded against, railway enterprise can in future be carried out very profitably.

Apart from the large moral view of the matter which is irresistible. Considerations of mere policy ought to end in the requisite imperial guarantee. The military importance of a complete railway system in Indian, can hardly be over-rated. Railways would make it possible to hold the country by a smaller army of Europeans than that now employed. Troops might be massed at the hills in healthy localities, to the obvious advantage of the state, and of everybody else. But what is of far greater importance, a proper system of communication by road and railways, would lead to full bellies, a full treasury, and a contented people, and those terrible and periodical famines which cast so deep a stigma on British rule in India would be impossible. While half the population of Orissa were dying during last year, there was grain enough to feed all the hungry mouths within little more than a hundred miles of them; and yet they starved. There were no means by which to carry it, and I must add with shame, that my brother civilians were so bound and swathed with red tape, that they could not act, in directions open to them. Hunger is a very dangerous enemy in India. Give the people the means of indulging

their trade instinct, allow them to develop the splendid resources of their wonderful country, and it would be easy enough to hold.

A right system of development, and so on as a natural sequence to the realization of a proportionately enormous government revenue, depends in the main on proper methods of communication in the interior. But hand in hand with efforts in that direction, which would always have a tendency to promote, and stimulate such undertakings, schemes likely to be in a large sense publicly profitable, should be led up to, and facilitated by a government action, well within its province. Irrigational projects, and generally concerns calculated to increase production, and public welfare, ought to have at their disposal, the credit of the government, as a means for getting capital; and in the accomplishment of this end, it would be important, that the drawbacks to commercial success, inseparable to the acknowledged debilitating effect of "the guarantee system" should be avoided, by dealing with companies and others having need of the government credit, so as while every due attention was bestowed on the preliminary, and principal consideration, as to the feasibility of a scheme. Government interference of every sort should cease with the determination to accord the aid sought.

It is not necessary to dilate on the advantages of such a system of assistance. Capital would be obtained on cheaper terms than could otherwise be obtained, and all parties concerned would have good assurance of the safety and profit of the venture. A local government having afforded its support after a careful investigation into the merits of a scheme, would secure itself, as far as practicability is concerned, and it could arrange so as to place itself in a position with its principals, which would afford a certain, and ready indemnification against loss. For the assistance contemplated

would not extend beyond such a degree of aid as could be reasonably accorded on sound commercial principles, to projectors already partially provided with capital to work a remunerative business, everything connected with which would be a security against an advance.

In other respects also, this sort of Government action would be highly beneficial, and calculated to meet necessities peculiarly Indian. In India the potent individualism which is a striking feature of English national character has no existence; and co-operative effort is in its infancy. But it has a fertile soil to grow in, and its prospects are of a sort which demand a heedful, and determined encouragement. Great Britain has a grand moral duty to perform, in teaching the natives of India the value of co-operation, and fortunately for herself its performance is likely to repay her inordinately. The task is not a difficult one. The very lack of individualism which is a fault in Indian nature, renders a people so prone to trade as Hindoos are, peculiarly susceptible to any influence tending towards co-operation. Government encouragement should be extended without stint in any and every way likely to lead the current of Indian feeling towards co-operative enterprise.

It is just this kind of leading and help which is more wanted than anything else in the government of India. The natives are easily led, very easily frightened, recover confidence with difficult slowness, and it is next to impossible to drive them from the usages of centuries to new things. The one treatment from which progress can be hoped for must be ductile, and ^{so} ~~it cannot fail in being~~ successful.

There is a marked inclination on the part of the Indian community, to do more than it ever has done in the way of trusting its capital in European hands, and to use, instead of hoarding it. The recent government loan of £600,000 to be

expended in public works in the Bombay Presidency, found ready investors. It was taken up by native capital with remarkable rapidity, and there is every reason to think, that capital sufficient for a great amount of the public wants would be forthcoming if it were asked for by the Indian government, on terms suitable to native inclinations. The trade spirit should be met half way, and instead of doling out a crumb from the yearly revenue, as is now done, to meet requirements for public works of vast amount, a sufficiently large loan should be taken up to deal with the question in a lump.

India so developed, would be a tower of strength to England. Freed from this ever recurring annual incubus, the elasticity of its revenue, which under circumstances, of but poor encouragement during the last ten years has proved itself, would, with proper trade communications, produce a great expansion, and instead of employing an European army in India to hold and overawe it, an immensely increased revenue might, if that were an object, enable the Imperial Government to establish on the Indian hills a grand army better paid, superior in intelligence, taught in a large field, and altogether capable of meeting and beating, in or out of Europe, armaments on the scale of prodigiously brutal magnificence, which signalizes the European councils of these days. At any rate a peaceful and great prosperity is possible for India, by a fair abstinence from meddlesome interference with the customs of a people who are not understood at Westminster, and to whom England owes a debt, which it is easy for her to pay, without putting her hand in her pocket, by a just acknowledgment of her responsibilities calculated to add to her honour, and to save her from perils by which she is menaced.

CHAP. III.

I do not wish to convey, that the measures suggested have been altogether omitted in the government of India. To have done so, would be tantamount to a total dereliction of duty, which cannot be fairly urged against British rule. But freely admitting a desire to do what is right, I maintain, that the methods employed, emanating as they do from an amount of ignorance, and misapprehension in England of everything Indian, culpable to the last degree, have ended in a supine incapacity which pervades the whole machinery of government. And I must confess, as regards the present, that the want of intelligence inveighed against, is no less a marked feature in Home affairs, than it is in the conduct of things abroad. It is part and parcel of an alarmingly debilitated administrative condition into which the country has drifted. "How not to do it" is a climax rife throughout the whole state organization. But in no branch of it are the results so disastrously exhibited as they are in the government of India. The state of things inspired by timidity, and stupidity, which attempts to govern an Empire in the East, by a complicated machinery moved at Westminster, and persistently brought into contact with, so as to clash with, wheel within wheel of an Indian arrangement, apparently constructed for the express purpose of clogging, has probably, as an instance of outrageously disgraceful incapacity, rarely been equalled.

In India, as here at Home, it is not that there is a lack of good pith and back bone to work with. There is as much English intelligence, and ability, as ever there was.

But somehow it does not come to the surface. A system has grown up amongst us which seems to stifle action. The right men are seldom in the right places, and if they are, as is more frequently the case in India than here, their efforts and inclinations are of no avail. By an overwhelming majority, both as to intelligence, and numbers, of Indian public officers—nay more it is not too much to say—it is altogether conceded by Indian experience, that centralisation as a form of government is ruinously inapplicable to India. And yet the tendency is entirely towards centralisation. Westminster, in the face of unceasing remonstrance from a council effete, by its very constitution, for all practical purposes; but which nevertheless is composed of the highest obtainable Indian authorities, persists in a policy of centralisation, so utterly unworkable and calamitously faulty, that what little is achieved in India towards progress, is done in the teeth of it, amidst vexation and obstruction, which is only overcome by a disinterested courage, that has made for Indian officials, a fame as ~~un~~perishable, and far more glorious *un* than the renown of the deeds of arms which won the Empire. The career of Indian administrators, from the Governor General downwards, is one constant kicking against the pricks. There is not an officer throughout the length and breadth of the land, who has not got his hands securely tied behind him. This is not an exaggerated comparison. A great deal of work is done in spite of obstructions as vexatious as if the hands that did it were tied, and the means by which completion is secured frequently derive a conscientious approval, rather from a feeling of expediency, than from a knowledge that instructions were carried out to the letter. On this subject I shall have more to say in course of some remarks about public works.

It would hardly be possible to conceive a state of things so ill adapted to centralisation, as that which exists in India.

The enormous extent of territory, its immense population, wedded to usages which have remained unchanged during hundreds of years. The fact that the government is carried on by an insignificantly small numerical proportion of foreigners, whose manners are in detail different to those of the people governed, and whose characteristics of temperament are likely, without constant, and efficient control, to bring them into collision with the natives, are only a few of the preliminary circumstances, which render it imperative that the government should be from small centres.

The merits of de-centralisation in opposition to the present system, cry aloud for recognition. The Empire for purposes of government, should be broken up into divisions, the arrangement of Presidencies being left un-interfered with, except that three more should be added to those in existence, viz: the Punjab and Scinde, the N.W. Provinces, and Central Indian Provinces. Each of the six Presidencies to be governed by a Governor and Council. The Empire being under control of the Viceroy. The internal economy of the Presidencies should be entrusted to commissioners placed in charge of suitable divisions of a Presidency with very large powers, and responsibilities, especially with reference to finance; and this and the army are the only two departments of State, to which centralisation can be advantageously applied. In regard to the latter, efficiency would undoubtedly be best secured by the most perfect centralisation possible. The entire control should fall into the hands of the Viceroy and his Commander-in-Chief and Council. But in the matter of finance it would be essentially necessary in applying the principle, to distinguish between Imperial Revenue and Local Revenue. The former would naturally be derived from the latter, as an aggregation of surplus produce, centralised in the Imperial treasury. But that each commission should have at its

disposal the whole of its revenue to be employed as the Commissioner might think most likely to lead to profit, is indispensable in this sketch. The profits in the working of each estate, would constitute the Imperial Revenue, at the disposal of the Viceroy for Imperial purposes ; and it is contended that they would be larger in this way than they could otherwise be. The method Imperial, to the last degree, would afford every atom of the Empire the best possible facility for doing its best. If in any particular commission there were a deficit, funds would of course be provided from the Imperial Revenue. But practically the Commissions might be arranged so as to give each a certainty of affording surplus produce.

It would not be a part of this proposal to interfere with existing arrangements for acts of legislation. Imperial and local legislation could go on together just as they do now, with the additional advantages which would be secured from a system of small centres, the local peculiarities of each commission obtaining due consideration, while anything like a tendency to clash, which might arise out of conflicting interests of neighbouring commissions would be controlled, and allowed for by the Presidency authority.

Centralisation is an old man of the sea, too firmly seated on the neck of India, to be much affected by such a paper as this, and the sketch I am engaged upon is therefore in the merest outline. Its aim, de-centralisation would place responsibilities in hands most likely to fulfil them, and a leading feature in the plan would be India governed in India, instead of from Westminster. The Viceroy's authority in his Vice-royalty ought to be absolute in matters of detail. He should be responsible to Parliament directly, and in a large way, which would leave him free as regards the detail of his charge, and his connection with a Crown

Minister should be confined to matters of a collateral nature which might render an English agency indispensable. The tendency of this consummation would be towards that kind of strong government which comes of unfettered executive action, and it would have a marked effect on Asiatics. Thought in the East is still well within the realm which asks for a despotism. In all things the habit of mind of Orientals leads to a craving for an outward and visible sign. In matters of Government especially they are not advanced enough to understand or appreciate abstractions. A definite finality of authority visible, and near at hand, is more than all things desired by the natives of India. This they should have vested in the Viceroy, beyond whom appeal should cease.

It would be essentially a part of a system of decentralisation to bring appellate action within very narrow limits. A commissioner's executive functions within his commission would be final, except in instances where things *are* involved of a nature outside the commission, and therefore not calculated to impair authority within it. He should be as much as possible presented to the native mind as an embodiment of its favourite idea of good government. A king sitting in a gate judging justly and rapidly. It was so Akbar ruled India, and though the prosperity which was the fruit of his wisdom has long since passed away, his memory is ever ripe in the hearts of the people.

Such a project would of course depend mainly on the trustworthiness of its executive officers; and this element necessary for success would not be wanting. Vice-regal despotism, Royal, in the highest sense, would still be controlled directly by the Imperial Parliament, and indirectly by the public opinion of the world; and it is impossible for a body of officers to offer higher security

for integrity, trust, and worth of every kind, than that which nigh on a century of tried fidelity places at the disposal of Indian officials. It is an astonishing thing that qualifications so entirely without parallel, spot, and blemish, should not be availed of in the manner most obviously to the interests of their employers. Honesty and ability are separately gems of great worth. How altogether priceless do they become when combined in one man! But what then must be the value to a government, of a body of men whose unquestioned honesty and ability has a world wide reputation? Yet with a perversity that would be corrected in a nursery, distrust of its officers is the soul of Indian government. From the Governor-General downwards no one is trusted. An Eastern people, simple in their habits, asking always to be led, trusting by instinct where trust is due, absolutely obliged for want of an equivalent to use the word "appeal," in their languages to convey the idea expressed by it, are deliberately invited to distrust by a nauseating system of endless appeal, the moral effect of which, acts, and re-acts with incalculable injury on governors, and those governed.

It cannot be too constantly borne in mind in dealing with Indian questions that what is excellent here, is not necessarily so there. Of late years we have had a striking illustration of this truth in the working of the "Budget." However well the plan has succeeded in Europe, in theory and practice it is inapplicable in India. It is just one of those attempts at centralization which must fail. The Public Works department of all others in India, is one that cannot be administered to on principles of centralization. To do so had been tried, and had failed signally before the introduction of the "Budget." Since then the department has become a chaos of irregularity and uselessness. The "Budget" was introduced with a great flourish of trumpets,

as a scientific economical measure, bearing upon it the stamp of all European political enlightenment. It was to reduce expenditure, and save the country. The debt incurred during 57-58 could only be dealt with that way. The inauguration instructions were to frame sketch estimates on the lowest possible scale, and the check system was brought into play ad nauseam. An estimate sent in by a district engineer, after he had pared it down to a point which left no margin for contingencies, was again curtailed by his superior officers. Then the total of the Presidency sketch estimates was reduced by the local government, and finally the amount sanctioned by the government of India was less by many per cent. than the total asked for by the local government. In one instance a deduction of fifty-three per cent. below an estimate as it was originally framed was the result; and as a rule, a curtailment of at least twenty-five per cent. is made ~~ready~~ in the sketch estimates. The practical consequence is simply ruinous. An executive engineer has placed at his disposal a sum of money insufficient for his needs; works are begun, funds exhausted, and the work, perforce, left unfinished. The rain comes, and not infrequently a total waste of labour and expenditure ensues. For several successive years a road between two places of commercial importance was washed away in the rains. The annual grant was insufficient to carry the work past a point in its construction at which an embankment would be weather proof. The matter was over and over again urgently represented by the engineer officer in charge. But up to the time I left India his efforts had been in vain. He could not get money enough to place the work out of danger. It was washed away year after year. Had the matter been within the financial cognizance, and under the responsibility of a Commissioner, the road could have been made without accident, and in time to meet the contingency it was in-

tended for, that is during the American war, when it was of paramount importance to provide a speedy transport of Indian cotton to the sea.

This difficulty of transport by rail and road, by the first for reasons which I have remarked on, and by the latter means, because the duty of road making has been disgracefully neglected, was the real obstacle in the way of the development of cotton resources second to none in the world, at a time when an opportunity for trade advancement was offered to India peculiarly suited to her capabilities, and when, looking to the duration of the crisis, and the anxiety there was to take advantage of it, nothing but a state of things hopelessly beyond the reach of remedy, rendering action of all sorts, government, and otherwise, impossible, prevented India from succeeding to the position which America had given up. No doubt there were objections to Indian cotton on the score of want of length of staple, imperfection of packing, dirt, and adulteration, which made it less preferable than American cotton. But little or no American cotton was to be got during the four years of the war; and the Indian article, such as it was, was received and used here with an energy of adaptiveness, which in point of meeting and beating difficulties was a lesson which Westminster might have accepted at the hands of Manchester. Had the Indian question of production been dealt with by even a small amount of the practical sense which was brought to bear on the matter of manufacture, not only would the Indian staple have been brought to market in a decent condition, but the American plant which grows as well in India as it does in the Southern States of America, might have been now in a fair way towards a growth, which one day or other will supersede the indigenous cotton. The supply from India is purely dependent on internal economical arrangements for which the government of the country is

wholly responsible. There is a vast acreage of cotton field, and an enormous population willing to grow, and anxiously awaiting circumstances which would make it possible to do so at a profit. The whole question hinges on facilities of production, and carriage to the sea, which it is the duty of the government to ensure.

This brings me back to the matter of de-centralization. During the American war a gallant Commander-in-Chief of conspicuous ability was sent to Goozerat, one of the richest cotton fields in the world, where he had never been before, to determine what was best to be done, to assist and stimulate the cotton trade, especially in the way of roads. He was there not quite ten days, hurrying through the country by railway, and by forced marches, to determine as regards the road question, what was clear to every official of a year's standing in the province, and after he made his proposal, it was considerably modified by the Imperial Government at Calcutta, some thousand miles and more from the scene of action; and to this day, nearly four years since, I believe nothing has been done. One ~~of~~ two courses were obviously open to a choice made on the spot. To make enormously expensive, but permanently useful first class roads, or to leave existing cart tracks in the state in which they have been used for centuries, bridging water courses in their lines. This last is what a Commissioner would have done. But neither plan was adopted. Good for nothing second class roads were decided upon, which from the nature of the soil and climate must be destroyed every rainy season. So palpable a mistake could not have been committed by any one at all familiar with the district. Nothing could be more discouraging to local officers, than this kind of distrust and judging at a distance. Such a policy is utterly prohibitive of progress.

Kattiawar, which is about the size of Ireland, and marvellously fertile, with splendid facilities for irrigation which have been a good deal availed of by native cultivators, is in want of a little over one hundred miles of railway, which would not only pass through one of the finest portions of the Goozerat cotton field, connecting Ahmedabad, the terminus of a railway from Bombay, with the sea on the coast of Kattiawar ; but would tap and develop an enormous store of wealth, lying for miles and miles on both sides it. It is impossible to conceive a line of railway more certain to be remunerative as a commercial speculation. The Bombay Government has represented this urgently, and repeatedly to the Government of India, adding that £140,000 of the necessary capital has been offered by the native chiefs in Kattiawar, and it might have clinched its arguments by mentioning that the benefit to the salt revenue alone, derivable from the railway, which would pass the salt pans on the Runn, would altogether secure the government against risk which it might incur in granting a guarantee to capital, awaiting that concession to undertake the work. But the centre of authority at Calcutta, or a complication of ineffectiveness, in which that centre, and the one at Westminster were concerned, has swamped the scheme. It is tabooed effectually, and nothing will be done. And so it is in the case of other projects of equal importance. "How not to do it" is the rule from the beginning to the end of the chapter.

A never ceasing excuse for want of action in undertakings urgently required is, that other schemes of greater Imperial necessity must command the limited resources at the disposal of the government. But this is very weak reasoning, and disgracefully false economy. The system, as it is, cannot but afford very limited means. It should be altered. Negotiate if necessary large Imperial loans.

Allow a Commissioner to improve his commission as a prudent landlord improves his estate, by well considered loans, raised on the security of the estate, and contemplated works. Permit a local government to repeat constantly what the Bombay Government did so successfully the other day, for the first time, when £600,000 was raised for public works as soon as the loan was in the market, and there would be no cause for complaint on the score of insufficient means. Capital is there in the country anxiously awaiting opportunity for investment in properly secured enterprises, and it ought to be employed to compass two most important duties which are incumbent on the British Government. The development of a magnificent country, and the moral improvement of its people. It is of the very last importance to encourage the disposition there is to invest capital, which a few years ago would have been hopelessly hoarded away. Hindooism is only assailable by indirect means, principally directed through its trade susceptibilities, and until Indian thought is somewhat removed from the groove in which it has run for ages, it is hopeless to look for anything like real progress. No opportunity of conducing to a new, and better state of things should be suffered to pass by.

But what is the value of India to England? was a question asked me the other day by an English Government Officer of high standing, and fair intelligence. Briefly, very briefly, when the exigencies, and importance of the question are considered, I have to say in answer. Upwards of 80,000 men of the white army of the Empire, more than 10,000 of whom are always at Home as a reserve, are paid out of Indian Revenues. The returns of Indian trade with this country, for the year 60-61, amounted to, £89,674,000, being larger than those of the trade with any other country, America not excepted; and since then, owing to the war, a large increase of Indian transactions has taken place. Indeed, as I have

remarked, nothing but an unnatural prostration, due entirely to mal-administration, stood in the way of India becoming what America had been, the great cotton field of the world ; and as it is, a large proportion of the supply to the English market, comes from India. And in other respects its almost boundless resources have stood its conquerors in good stead, in affording raw material for manufacture. When the Russian market was closed during the Crimean war, hemp and other fibres which had, till then, been received from Russia, were obtained from India, and in numberless other ways she is the most important source from which raw material is obtained. And this is a matter which has a weight and significance beyond mere commercial convenience. This country is a large workshop. It has not nearly sufficient acreage to render it self-supporting, in point of food producing capacity, or means of affording labour to its population. It depends upon importation of raw material to keep the hive at work, and furnish wages to pay the working bees, who have little enough elbow room, and have to struggle hard to live. Capital and labour have assumed an attitude towards each other which may well give cause for anxiety. There is no lack of indication to shew what would happen if anything were to interfere seriously with the means of paying wages. Within six weeks of the cessation of trade between Great Britain and India, the English poor man would be at the English rich man's throat. There would be hunger in the land, and the hard hands of the many would be driven to wrest from the few accumulations, with the collection of which, our connection with India has had not a little to do. It behoves Great Britain, in no slight measure to look to her relations with India ; for upon that dependency, in reality depends the stability of the Empire. It hardly reflects creditably on English intelligence, that the knowledge of the value of India to England, is

better understood on the Continent than here. What Prestige England has left in Europe rests largely upon English Indian ascendancy. There, at least, it is perfectly well known that Great Britain, without India, would be no longer an Empire.

This matter, the value of India to England, is too large to admit of examination in detail. I will content myself by adding, that the yearly average of the official home remittances, exceeds a sum of £13,000,000 ; that besides this a large and incalculable amount of money is received through private channels, to meet a host of necessities, which connect almost every family in England, directly, or indirectly with India, where thousands of officials carry with them social liabilities which permeate the structure of English society ; that the magnificent fleet by which communication between the two countries is maintained, in itself a source of national prosperity of huge dimensions, is subservient to colonial, and other important needs, which could not be so efficiently satisfied, were it not for the colossal requirements of the Empire which calls it into existence, and that the Imperial Budget does not contain a single item by which the English taxpayer is chargeable for anything in any way connected with India.

These facts, patent enough to any one thinking India worth the trouble of a thought, plain in their bearing on British prosperity, utterly beyond contradiction, and enormously important from every possible point of view from which they can be looked at ; make no kind of mark on public opinion, and few of the gentlemen of the House of Commons, who aspire to that kind of English statescraft, which occasionally makes India a stalking horse to serve disgraceful ends, have deemed it within their province, to utter one word of protest against an ignorant apathy concerning every thing Indian, from which in a moment of time the

whole Empire may be aroused by a crash of calamity, swifter, and more desolating, than any ruin which has yet overtaken a state. Verily he that runs may read the measure of English enlightenment, revealed by the broad day light of such things as these. India is a mirror in the East, casting a reflection on these western lands, that should, aye, that will burn them to ashes. Is it meet that the pearl of the morning should be thrown before swine? Is the complacent barbarism of Pall Mall to brood over things, whose fault most grievous of all to bear, is the begetting of caste, imitated here with a paltry shabbiness of evasion, that strives to hide birth, and lineage under a christian garb, too flimsy to disguise a deadly Philistinism? Is the most splendid Empire of the East, for ages the wonder and envy of the world, to be for ever a plaything in the hands of political charlatans, who have just astuteness enough to cling to the ship which their leaden stupidity is sinking? Is the grand sacrifice of an Empire here in the West, and there in the East to be offered before the Moloch of the Everlasting Dollar? Is grab-all-and-hold-it, picking his way with a smirk and grin, between the clubs of the Pall Mall Island, and that one at Westminster, to cry christianity and rob the world? When will this great English people purge itself of the poison which deadens its vitality? When will it come to know, that man's mission is to labour? Each inexorably to work, not for himself; but for the race, so that the benefit may come to him at last, through others. When will it be clear that the attitude, offensive and defensive, which class assumes against class, in this country, and man against man, is contemptible, and abominable; bred of the lacker of a putrid feudalism, and its concomitant droncism? So long as the English mind remains incapable of putting a proper price on rank flunkeyism. So long will tomahawks and scalping knives flourish in Pall Mall.

So long will the cannibals of that Island eat their first born children. So long will the nation have ashes and deadly drought, in its mouth ; and so long will India fail to obtain an honourable, and intelligent treatment from a nation, which is fast working out its own destruction, and her emancipation, by grab-all-and-hold-it proclivities, which go current as virtues in these days when the state carcase is stinking with rottenness.

